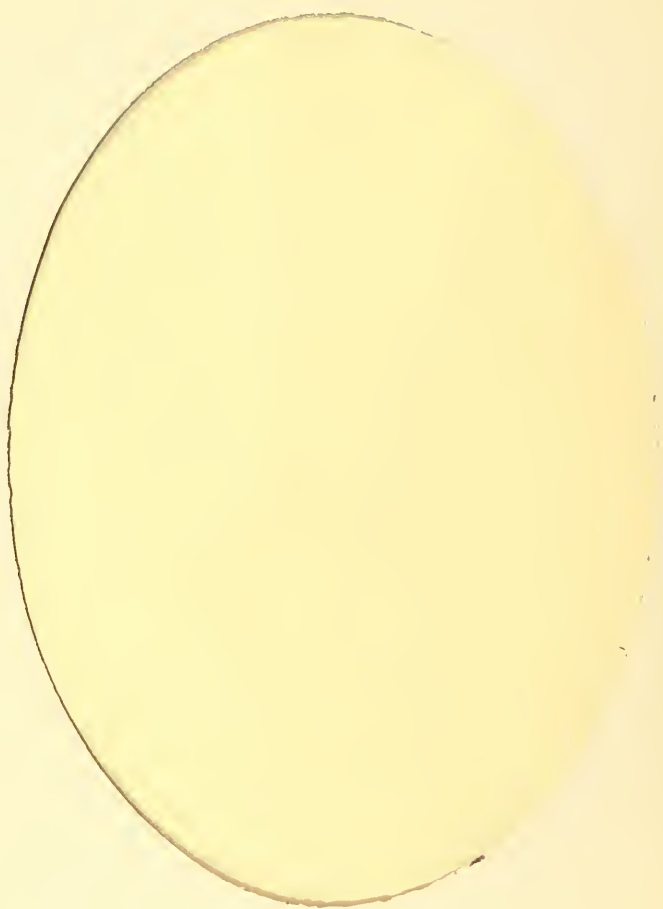


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ETINGS  
FROM  
COLORADO



REVERIES  
OF A  
HOMESTEADER  
AMANDA BLOCKER BYRD

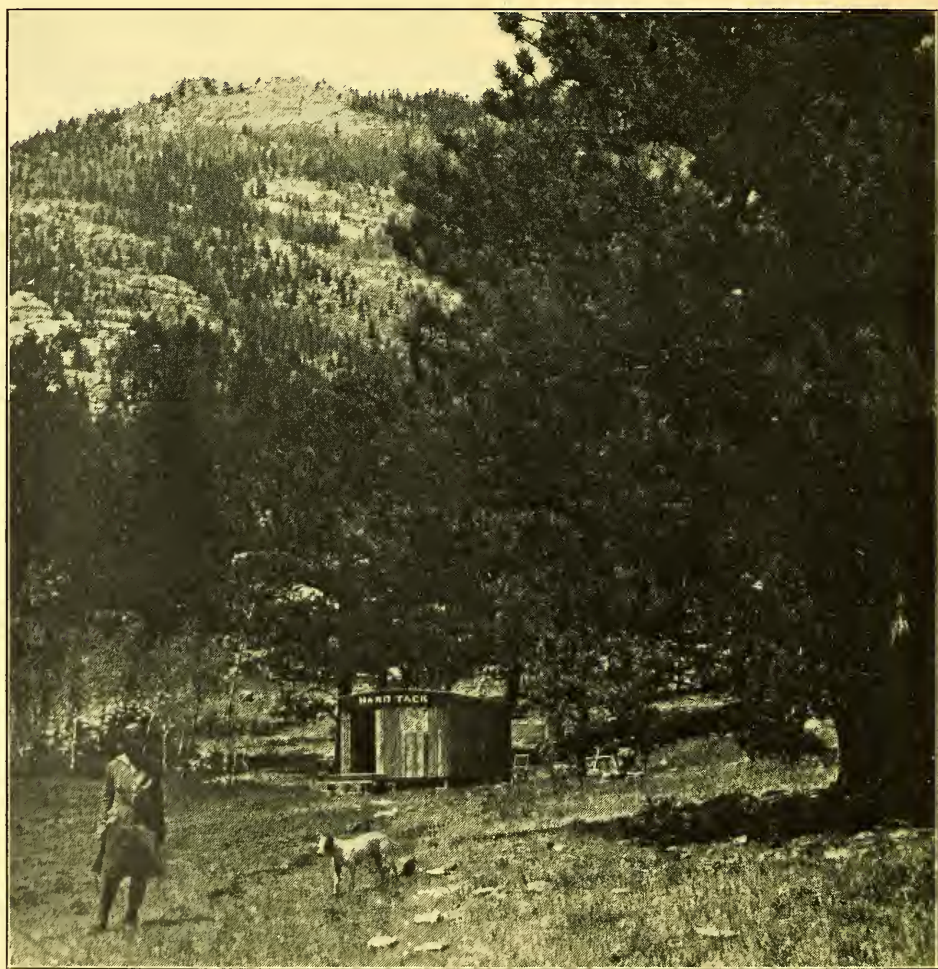




VIEW OF THE CRAGS  
From My Cabin Door

*Photo by C. E. Mace*





MY HOMESTEAD AT ESTES PARK

*Photo by C. E. Mace*

# REVERIES *of a* HOMESTEADER

By  
AMANDA BLOCKER BYRD  
ESTES PARK, COLORADO



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Amanda Blocker Byrd



Published by  
THE SMITH-BROOKS PRINTING CO.  
Denver, Colorado

PS3503  
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DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

*\$0.60*  
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JUL 15 1916

*no. 1.*

## MEMORIES OF A HOME

---

I wish I could make you see it—  
It's all so plain to me,  
The "Big House"—the cabins—the pastures—  
And the giant white-oak tree;  
'Neath which, with childish abandon,  
We shrieked aloud in glee,  
As we pelted each other with acorns,  
In our rompings wild and free.

Then off to the fields of cotton,  
To hide in their depths of snow,  
From the fruitless search of "Mammy,"  
With her painful steps and slow:  
Another dash, and scramble,  
And a wail of protest round,  
As we rushed through the baskets of cotton  
And scattered it over the ground.

Then away to the dewy meadows,  
Past the cattle round and sleek,  
To wriggle our toes in delicious mud  
In the crystal "bored-well" creek:  
But soon, like the voice of Judgment,  
Old Eli—"Mammy's" scout—  
Was thundering forth the stern command:  
"Ebery one of you come straight out!"

And in the cool, calm evening,  
When the moon was rising high,  
The twang of the banjoes mellow and soft,  
Would rise to the Southern sky.  
With Mattie's clear soprano,  
And Henry's bass so strong,  
And the bell-like tenor of Cicero,  
As it joined in each weird, sweet song.

They were children, too, like the rest of us  
In their own peculiar way,  
Dependent as we on the master hand  
That was always their guide and stay:  
The hand that could rule with a rod of iron  
If occasion ever arose,  
But "De Doctor's" hand, whose tender skill,  
Assuaged and healed their woes.

Ah, well! He has passed, with his courtly grace,  
With a brave and smiling adieu,  
And it seemed round the Old Plantation  
That the light went with him too.  
But a child—from that day a woman,  
On the sea of Life's fury and foam,  
Has a rudder that's guiding her safe to port,  
Fond memories of a home.

## AS WE LIVE

---

The flute-like notes of a bird-song,  
At the breaking of the dawn;  
A fragrant breath of jasmine,  
And we know that spring is born—  
And a spirit fresh from Eden,  
Enters with the coming morn.

The bee's insistent droning,  
And the rustle of the corn;  
The wood-thrush's gentle thrumming,  
And the summer is half gone—  
And a heart's ablaze with rapture  
In the glory of Life's noon.

A white and bounteous harvest,  
Awaiting the reaper's call;  
The seared and yellow grasses,  
And the autumn leaves' dull fall—  
And a heart grown tired and weary  
With the glamor of it all.

A bleak and leafless forest,  
And the snow upon the hill;  
The timber wolf's weird howling  
And the winter's biting chill—  
And a forehead cold and white  
Above a face forever still.



## HOLDING THE PRESIDENT'S JOB

---

I'm right in the thick of the fight called "Life"—  
The Business Life, at that,  
And maybe you think it's fun to slave,  
And live in a Harlem flat;  
If you're dissatisfied at home,  
Just listen a moment, pray,  
And I'll give you a tiny little slice  
Of my business life today.

It is, "How, Judge Grant, can you leave right now  
To fish for a week or more,  
The man you've been writing in Kankakee  
Is to be in your office at four;  
Your insurance is out, I am certain, today,  
You've asked Mr. Smith to tea,  
And heav'ns, alive! Have you taken your pill,  
You should have had it at three.

Oh, well! If I must, I can do all the work,  
I've done it so often, you see,  
Just go right along, I'll attend to it all  
(Except taking old Smith out to tea.)  
What's this? I've been with you for almost ten years.  
You'd a little more salary pay—  
I'm quite overcome—you're giving me now  
Almost two and a quarter a day.

Ah, well, he is off—I must take up the load,  
But I'm almost too weary to speak—  
I'm tired of holding the president's job  
For fifteen dollars a week.  
I'm tired—dead tired, of the sham of it all—  
These so-called positions of trust,  
And I feel if the grind isn't stopped pretty soon  
That something is going to bust.

## A WORKING GIRL'S WAIL

---

I was out at the home of Jane Carew,  
Had had my Sunday nap.  
Awoke to find Jane sitting there,  
A paper on her lap.  
Said she, "I'm reading what you wrote,  
The Judge—your office grind.  
Now take your pen, sit right down here  
And try to picture mine.

I work for the Branscomb Street Railway,  
Down here at Timbuctoo;  
Perhaps you think you're the only one,  
Who has much work to do.  
For downright grind, unceasing toil,  
With scarcely bread and meat,  
The office of a street railway  
Is pretty hard to beat.

Mr. Bell, our august President,  
Is 'sposed the thing to run;  
But little does the Public know,  
The man behind the gun.  
Of course, Bell gets the glory too;  
I don't object to that,  
But I'd like to have enough just once  
To buy an Easter hat.

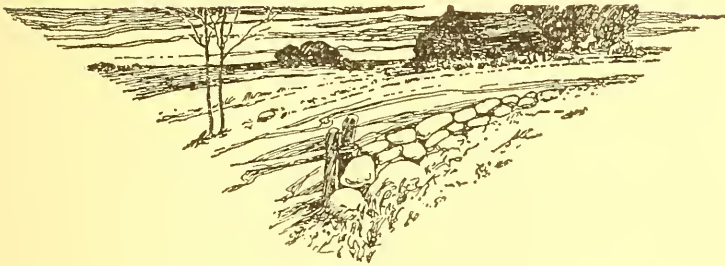
I read the mail and telegrams,  
Dictate the answers too;  
Prepare reports of "Total Haul,"  
And "Daily Revenue."  
I'm writing now, both night and day,  
A paper Bell will read,  
Before the Chamber of Commerce  
On "Our City's Greatest Need."

Last week I gave to the foreman  
A "Cut-in" for an arc,  
And wrote the order plainly, too,  
For Claxton River Park.  
He went southeast a mile or two,  
Almost to Fourteenth Street,  
And ran a line out in the woods  
Some fiteeen hundred feet.

I asked the "Light Committee"  
To help me if they could.  
The City ordered in a light  
Where that already stood.  
The things that Board will do for Bell,  
The favors he shows them,  
Would make the People, if they knew,  
Rise up and howl with vim.

I see where he comes out on this  
For his twenty thousand per;  
But his secretary, who deals in steals,  
What of the wage of her?  
Her business honor, like his is sold,  
His secrets are hers as well.  
But because she's a woman, her soul is worth  
One-tenth what they pay to Bell.

Why, Jane, I said, aren't you ashamed  
To sit and cry that way,  
And not so much as raise your hand  
To hasten Freedom's Day.  
I marched right with the suffragettes,  
Clear down Fifth Avenue;  
But, Jane (my conscience makes me tell),  
It almost killed me, too.



# STRATEGY

---

In the gloaming, oh, my sister,  
When you're coming home from work,  
When each man upon the subway  
Turns into a brutal Turk;  
When your head is throbbing wildly  
With a pulsing well-known woe,  
And it seems that each one near you  
Treads in turn upon your toe:

In the gloaming, oh, then ponder  
On the error of your ways  
Had it not been for the hobble  
And the tightness of your stays,  
You'd have surely beat the fat man  
To that seat next to the door,  
And you would not now be jostled  
With the crowd upon the floor.

But the case is not yet hopeless,  
Turn attention to that man,  
He pretends to read his paper,  
But your face begins to scan;  
Careful, now, or you will miss it,  
He mistakes your weary frown,  
And he thinks that you believe in  
Equal rights for sitting down.

Haste then to dispel this notion,  
Be a little clinging vine,  
Grasp a strap and meekly hang there,  
Till his eyes look into thine;  
Then with timid glance around you,  
(It has never failed as yet),  
Murmur softly, "Can't you make room  
For an antisuffragette?"



# THE HIDDEN BEAUTY

---

I stood in the marts of the city,  
    'Mid the ceaseless noise and din,  
And I watched the myriad faces,  
    All scarred by toil and sin;  
And I dreamed a dream of Freedom,  
    Of men loosed from oppression's rod,  
With souls unsullied—untarnished,  
    In the image and likeness of God.

Then I saw each life before me,  
    As a block of marble stand,  
In which the image lay dormant,  
    Awaiting the chisel of man;  
For man himself is the sculptor,  
    'Tis his to lose or to win  
The beauty encased in the marble,  
    The image imprisoned therein.

All amazed I stood and watched them  
    Begin with resolute mien,  
With mallet and chisel and hammer,  
    To free the image unseen;  
And I asked whence came the model,  
    If 'twere furnished by fate or by chance;  
But each said that he kept before him  
    Man as Master of Circumstance.

And the dream that I dreamed still holds me,  
    And the vision clearer grows,  
Till I seem to see sorrow and sighing  
    Fade out in death's bitter throes;  
And a new race, proud and noble,  
    Move forth with Freedom's rod,  
Aware of its princely station,  
    As the sons and the daughters of God.

## LONGING FOR NEW YORK

---

I got the Wild West fever,  
Like many another one.  
I thought that Heaven was right out here,  
Close to the setting sun.  
I spent my last sou-markee  
For a berth upon the train,  
And now I'm here, but Heaven ain't,  
And I want my home again.

### Chorus

I'm sittin' in the Rocky Mountains,  
Longing for New York;  
I'm listening to the coyote's call,  
The magpie's awful squawk;  
And I'm lonesome, gee, I'm lonesome;  
I'm homesick, blue and sad;  
And when I think of old Broadway,  
It makes me downright mad.  
I'm tired of mountains bleak and high,  
Of valleys vast and wild;  
So New York, send a searcher out,  
And find your poor lost child.

The West's a wondrous country,  
It's big and wild and free.  
Her woods are filled with rarest game,  
Her crops a sight to see;  
But I'm scared of coyotes, wolves and bears,  
Cow-punchers—everything.  
I want to see old New York town,  
And hear George Cohan sing.

## FOLKS WHO AINT

---

Do you ever think of the folks who pose,  
Who pretend to be what they aint?  
Are you bored plum to death most every day,  
With some little tin-horn saint  
Who disapproves of the way you talk,  
And most everything you say;  
But who's filling her own little shriveled soul,  
With gossip the livelong day?

Do you know the brother who's shocked at your views,  
Likewise the things you read,  
But whose own little brain (if he ever had one),  
Is gradually going to seed?  
Do you know the sister who's horrified  
At the innocent joke you tell?  
Well, sir, it seems that folks like that  
Is already livin' in——Well——

We should worry and lose our peace,  
Grown perfectly bald or thin,  
And spend an hour of each glorious day  
Repentin' some trumpeted-up sin.  
Oh! it's jolly to be right out what you are,  
And shock half the world if you must,  
But to know that every old poser on earth,  
Is made as you are of dust.

---

Yet, to see that "A man's a man for a' that,"  
Though his roof be marble or sod.  
To look every fellow right square in the face  
And trust the rest all to God.

# THE DAUGHTER OF LIGHTNING JIM

---

Her dad was the king of the Lone Star ranch—  
They called him "Lightning Jim,"  
And there wasn't a man in the whole wide west,  
A quicker shot than him.

Now, Jim warn't none o' your scrappin' kind—  
He'd run a mile from a fuss,  
But if you backed him to the wall—  
Good Lord! Deliver us!

The boys, they worshiped the ground he walked,  
They'd a fought for him to the end,  
For when any kind o' trouble came,  
They knew where to find a friend.

But the kid was the one that ruled the ranch,  
With a kind and a gentle hand,  
You could tell her every care you had—  
She'd always understand.

And, say, 'twould'a done you good to see  
How Jim loved that little thing,  
And his great rough hand would rest on her head  
Like the touch of a mother-bird's wing.

And she was the same way 'bout her Dad,  
She'd stay right by his side,  
And follow him over the whole big ranch  
Plum happy and satisfied.

We taught her to ride, to shoot and to swim,  
To rope a horse or a steer,  
And her glad, free laugh would ring on the air,  
With a music sweet and clear.

I stayed on that place for twenty years  
Till I saw her a woman grown,  
And I reverently thanked the Lord each day,  
For the sweetest home I'd known.

But one black day for all on the ranch,  
Like a flash of his own nickname,  
From out a beautiful April sky,  
The summons for big Jim came.

God! I'm tryin' yet to forget how she looked  
When we brought him home that way,  
But it seems that the picture then stamped on my heart  
Will last till the Judgment Day.

She didn't take on like women folks do,  
Nor cry, nor mourn, nor shout,  
But her face it looked for all the world,  
Like a lamp with the light gone out.



Well, they started to settlin' up Jim's estate—  
Judge Spar and some other gent,  
And would you believe when them lawyers was through,  
There wasn't a dad-blamed cent.

But the kid never flinched when she saw how 'twas,  
She was grit clean through and through,  
And she went right off to the City near  
To get some work to do.

She started in some kind o' office job,  
An' a goin' to school at night,  
And it wasn't long, till she's right at the top  
By workin' with all her might.

But, say, you've been through it,  
You know what I mean—you understand business well,  
And you know for a little gal like that,  
It was simply and plainly—Hell.

You see 'em poured into the treadmill each day,  
By hundreds, so young and so bright,  
And you watch 'em emerge in a little while,  
All haggard and broken and white.

Well, they loaded her down with the work of two men  
Till they'd broken her spirit and health,  
And ground up her youth and beauty and charm,  
To further increase their wealth.

And then, to save their thieving hides,  
Like demons, with tongues of flame,  
Which was more than even the Lord would stand,  
Attacked her snow-white name.

I say it was more than the Lord would stand,  
Yes, sir, as sure as you're born,  
He, in tender love, reinforced her soul,  
With that of her Daddy's own.

'Twas then that she gained the strength to fight,  
And her senses reeled and swam,  
As she rose right up with a mighty wrath  
And a good, strong, honest—Damn.

Well, the bunch they wheeled with a terrible frown,  
Which faded away quite dim,  
As steady and clear from the great dark eyes,  
Blazed the spirit of Lightning Jim.

Now a grafter's always an ornery Turk,  
He'll train on the weak his guns,  
But you muster out an equal force  
And he takes to his heels and runs.

And they're runnin' yet from that little gal,  
Every gol-darned one, yes, sir—  
And the kid she fearlessly faces the world,  
And the world—it smiles on her.

# WINTER HOMESTEADING IN THE ROCKIES

---

I wish my Uncle Samuel  
Was in my place today,  
I wish he had a homestead claim  
On which he had to stay  
For seven long and dreary months,  
Throughout three solid years—  
Just scared to death cold winter nights,  
Of coyotes, cats and bears.

I wish he had to gather wood,  
And bring in water, too,  
From Fish Creek way across the road,  
And cut the ice clear through;  
Or melt great bucketsful of snow  
To wash his few small duds,  
And get the skin all off his hands,  
His eyes all full of suds.

I wish he had to lie awake,  
And listen to the wind  
A howling through the pine trees,  
Good Lord, it is a sin;  
And then get up and make a fire  
Of sticks all wet and nice,  
When every blooming waterpail's  
A solid cake of ice.

I wish he had to live on "spuds"  
And canned things from the store,  
And feed a bulldog on it, too,  
That always called for more;  
And play the doctor to that dog,  
Though horrified and sick,  
When a porcupine repels his charge,  
And shoots his quills in thick.

I wish he couldn't even see  
A moving-picture show,  
And thirty days throughout the month,  
Had not one place to go.  
When all of his amusement  
Was the music of the creek,  
And his gayest recreation,  
The mail man once a week.

I wish he had to make a crop  
In spring, upon this ground,  
With chipmunks rooting underneath,  
And cows a wondering 'round  
And eatin' up the things he'd plant,  
Unless he built a fence  
Of barbed wire, which the present war  
Has raised five hundred cents.

I bet if Uncle Sam could guess  
The things that we go through,  
He'd give the land all free and clear  
To men and women, too;  
And grubstake every one of them  
To ham and apple pie,  
And furnish them a soldier's home  
And pension till they die.

---

## SUMMER HOMESTEADING IN THE ROCKIES

---

With the mighty Rockies above me,  
And the river rushing by,  
In the Golden West—on the Continent's crest,  
In security sweet I lie  
By the side of the sky-blue waters,  
And under the sea-blue sky,  
While day-dreams rare, exclude dull care,  
As the hours glide swiftly by.

Like the wild things round about me,  
I sniff the scented breeze,  
And burrow deep for a fragrant sleep  
In a thicket of balsam trees;  
And kings may lose or conquer,  
And empires rise or wane;  
But sovereign still of my homestead hill,  
I dwell apart from pain.

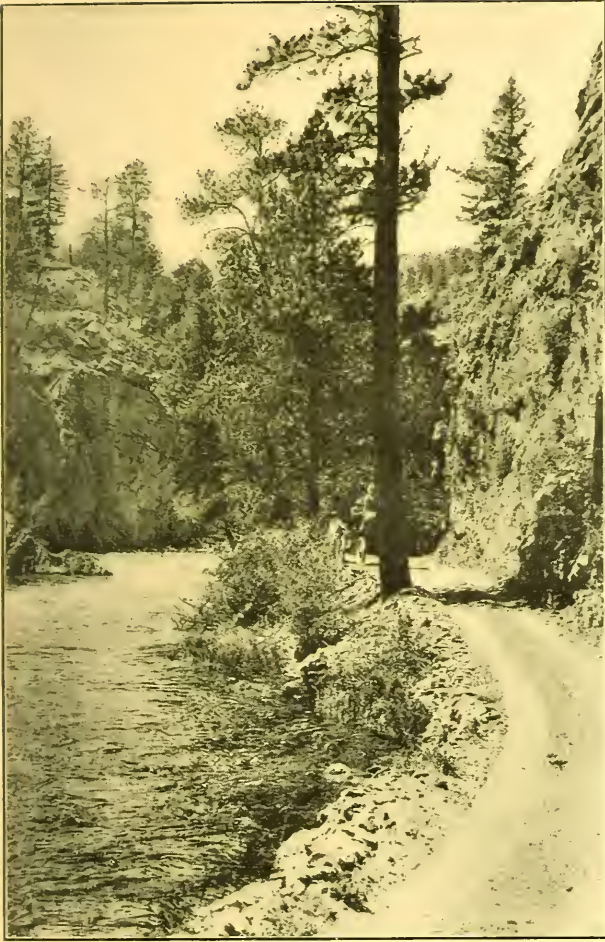
## THE GOLDEN WEST

---

When God made the world in the long ago  
From all that was choicest and best,  
He fashioned a beautiful garden  
And called it The Golden West.  
Here the mighty Rockies were stationed,  
Their silent watch to keep,  
And as channels to bear their message,  
The canons dark and deep;  
Whose rivers, sometimes with laughter,  
But oft with thunderous shouts,  
Rush swiftly on to the ocean  
As the mountains' trusted scouts,  
And the sea, in turn, with deafening roar,  
As its waves rise high to heaven,  
Bears on its crest, aloft to God,  
The word which the rivers have given.  
And the mountains, in their cloud-cloaks,  
Thru the centuries day and night,  
Have kept their solemn and silent watch  
Till their heads have turned to white.

Years ago, there was placed in this garden,  
A proud and courageous race,  
With instructions to guard and tend it  
And keep it a sacred place;  
But in time they lost the vision,  
And were deaf to the Owner's will—  
Their glory was not in saving life,  
But their vaunted pride to kill.  
And so, in most passionate sorrow,  
The report by the Rockies was given,  
To the restless sea, which with solemn voice,  
Delivered the message to Heaven.  
Then the Apaches and Utes—the Arapahoes,  
And each tribe of this lordly race  
Was turned away from its hunting grounds,  
Which passed to the new "Pale-face."  
And—that history shall not be repeated.  
Oh, refrain not from giving your best,  
Ye laborers in God's own garden—  
Ye men of The Golden West.





## BIG THOMPSON CANYON

On the Road to  
Estes Park

*Photo by H. T. Parke*

## A HOME- STEAD IN WINTER



*Photo by F. P. Clatworthy*



TIMBERLINE TREE

*Photo by R. J. Dillon*





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